

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated November 28, 2007. Claims 1, 22, 34 and 52 have been amended. No new matter was added by these amendments. Claims 53 and 54 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. A Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is submitted with this Response. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement and any other fees due.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1 to 39 and 42 to 59 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,511,377 to Weiss ("Weiss") in view of United States Patent No. 6,168,522 to Walker et al. ("Walker"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with this rejection. Additionally, certain of the claims have been amended to expedite prosecution.

I. Weiss Discloses A Cashless Gaming System.

Weiss discloses a cashless gaming system. A player establishes an electronic account at an enrollment station by selecting a personal identification number (PIN), depositing funds into an electronic account and receiving a player card. Each gaming machine in Weiss includes a card reader assembly as seen in Figs. 2 and 3 of Weiss. The card reader assembly includes a card reader, a keypad and a display. The player inserts their player card into the card reader assembly. The display then prompts the player to enter their PIN into the keypad. The gaming account system verifies the PIN and the display shows the player an option menu. The option menu includes options which if selected, enable the player to: review their electronic account balance; download a certain amount of funds to the gaming machine from their electronic account; and upload a certain amount of credits from the gaming machine to their electronic account. Fig. 8 of Weiss illustrates the player's options (in one embodiment of the Weiss gaming machine) when credits remain on the gaming machine credit meter. As illustrated in Fig. 8, the player's options are to: (a) transfer the credits to their electronic account through the card reader keypad by entering their PIN; (b) remove their card without transferring credits to their electronic account; and (c) abandon their card. In regard to Fig. 8 of Weiss, if a player removes their card without transferring

credits to their electronic account, the credits remaining on the gaming machine are subject to play independent of the removal of the card. In other words, in this embodiment of the Weiss gaming machine, the way for a player to retain credits remaining on the gaming machine, in accordance with the cashless system, is to enter their PIN and transfer credits to their account.

If the player does ultimately wish to redeem their electronic account balance, the player may visit a redemption apparatus. The physically separate redemption apparatus (i.e., not the gaming machine) includes a touch screen interface enabling a player to access the player's account balance and redeem the player's balance for cash and/or vouchers with their player card. (See Weiss, Figs. 4 and 4A; column 19, line 59 to column 20, line 38).

The previous Office Action cited column 21 of Weiss, which discloses a payout hopper for redeeming awards at a Weiss gaming machine. (Column 21, lines 13 to 17). Applicant reasoned in the previous Response that being primarily directed to a cashless gaming system, Weiss does not specify how the pay hopper is integrated into the disclosed gaming system. Applicant reasoned that this language in Weiss regarding the hopper appears to be "canned" language which is not consistent with the intended purpose of Weiss, which is to provide a cashless system where the gaming machines do not directly handle cash, or make payouts to the players.

Applicants maintain that Weiss is directed to a cashless system. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would not have been motivated to or have had any reason to modify the Weiss system to add a cash payout mechanism to a Weiss gaming machine. To add a hopper to a Weiss gaming machine would defeat the overall intended purpose of Weiss – keeping the Weiss gaming machines free of such payouts. It is respectfully submitted that for this reason alone, one of ordinary skill in the art would not modify Weiss as suggested by the Office Action and that the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

II. One Of Ordinary Skill In The Art Would Not Have Combined Weiss With Walker.

While it is clear that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to or have had a reason to modify Weiss, the Office Action stated that:

[s]ince the applicant is not satisfied with the description of the payout hopper, Walker has been introduced to teach that it would have been obvious to modify Weiss with a hopper controller to control the amount of currency to be received by or dispensed from the hopper as well as a touch screen or any other suitable data input means that allows the player to request an amount to be dispensed from the slot machine. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the instant invention to modify Weiss with a hopper controller and means to allows [sic] the player to request an amount to be dispensed from the slot machine to provide control over the amount of currency to be received by or dispensed from the hopper. (Office Action, pages 3 to 4).

The introduction of Walker for this purpose does not solve the basic issue that Weiss is directed to a cashless gaming system. Weiss did not identify a need, and there is no need to Modify Weiss to provide for the ability to "provide control over the amount of currency to be received by or dispensed from the hopper" because there is no use for the hopper in the cashless system of Weiss. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to use Walker to modify Weiss and destroy the overall intended purpose of Weiss, as described above.

III. The Combination Of Weiss And Walker Does Not Disclose A Cashout Menu Simultaneously Displaying At Least Two Different Cashout Options.

Additionally, to expedite prosecution, certain of the claims have been amended. The combination of Weiss and Walker does not disclose a cashout menu as now claimed. Amended Claim 1, for example, includes a cashout menu displayed by a display device when a player selects a cashout selector, the cashout menu simultaneously displaying at least two different cashout options enabling the player to request both a payout to the player of a first amount of a certain credit total displayed by

the display device in a first payout form and a transfer of a second amount of the certain credit total to a casino account, wherein the first payout form is different than the casino account and the first and second amounts are both deducted from the certain credit total. Applicants made similar amendments to Claims 22, 34 and 52 to expedite prosecution. The combination of Weiss and Walker also does not disclose a cashout menu as now claimed in Claims 22, 34 and 52.

In Weiss, the card reader assembly associated with each gaming machine includes a keypad and a display. After the player inserts their player card, the display prompts the player to enter their PIN into the keypad. The gaming account system verifies the PIN and the display shows the player an option menu. The option menu includes options which if selected, enable the player to: review their electronic account balance; download a certain amount of funds to the gaming machine from their electronic account; and upload a certain amount of credits from the gaming machine to their electronic account.

This option menu does not simultaneously display at least two different cashout options enabling the player to request both a payout to the player of a first amount of a certain credit total displayed by the display device in a first payout form and a transfer of a second amount of the certain credit total to a casino account. Weiss discloses the cashout menu including a "receive funds" option, making no mention of the simultaneous display of at least two different cashout options.

In Weiss, a player selects the printing of tickets and vouchers at a physically separate redemption apparatus on a display independent of a Weiss gaming machine or the display menu associated with a Weiss gaming machine's card reader assembly. Thus, the tickets and vouchers inherently are not offered on a cashout menu with payout forms such as the transfer of credits to an electronic gaming account at a Weiss gaming machine.

Walker also does not disclose such a cashout menu. In fact, Walker teaches away from simultaneously offering a payout in two different forms, stating: "[a]lternatively, the gaming device may transfer the requested amount to an account, such as a credit card account or an account maintained with the casino." (Column 3,

lines 12 to 14). Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent Claims 1, 22, 34, 52 and the claims depending therefrom are patentable over the combination of Weiss and Walker and in condition for allowance.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLP

BY 

Adam H. Masia
Reg. No. 35,602
Cust. No. 24573

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